

THE
POOR SOLDIER;
AN
AMERICAN TALE.

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From the Author.

THE
POOR SOLDIER;

AN
AMERICAN TALE:

FOUNDED ON A RECENT FACT.

INSCRIBED TO

MRS. C R E S P I G N Y.

"If terms uncouth and jarring phrases wound
"The softer sense with inharmonious sound,
"Yet, here let listening Sympathy prevail,
"While conscious TRUTH unfolds her piteous Tale!"

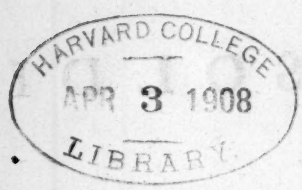
FALCONER'S *Shipwreck*.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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Bright fund

T O
MRS. C R E S P I G N Y.

THE following POEM, MADAM, unworthy of being inscribed to your name, I should never have presumed to obtrude on your notice, had you not been *the only Person* to whom it could properly be dedicated.

THE flattering, though undeserved, partiality, with which you have long honoured me, will, I am confident, incline you to receive the fruit of my labours with that candour and indulgence so peculiarly your own:—from People in general I dare not hope to experience an equal degree of kindness; but, whatever be the light in which they may consider the
ensuing

vi D E D I C A T I O N.

ensuing LINES, I shall always derive one gratification from having written them, that of being furnished with an opportunity of shewing the respect with which I am,

M A D A M,

Your sincere Admirer

and very affectionate Friend

THE AUTHOR.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE misfortunes of CHARLES SHORT, an American Loyalist, whose life constitutes the subject of the following POEM, are so aptly calculated to soften the human heart, and enforce the great duty of Benevolence, that it seemed incumbent on those who possessed the power, to make such a Story generally known: and, in order to heighten the interest, it was thought expedient that the Tale should be told in Verse.

THE Person who has undertaken this difficult task, feels herself so very unequal to it, that she cannot, without extreme timidity and apprehension, place her Work before the eyes of a discerning Public: but, though her Poetry may abound with errors, she presumes to boast one merit, that of having adhered, in every possible instance, to the most exact truth; except where the fear of being charged with flattery, has prevented her from bestowing a just degree of praise on that amiable and distinguished Character, whose

†

active

active benevolence induced her to stand forth the Protectress of a worthy, but unfortunate SOLDIER.

RESPECTING that part of the wretched Creature's life which passed in Great-Britain, every circumstance, related in the following Pages, is *literally true*; but with regard to that part which was spent in America, his sudden death prevented him from giving a minute relation of some particulars; however, even in this period of the Story, Truth has marked the outline.

AND if a perusal of the ensuing POEM should tend to soften but one heart, before insensible to the emotions of Benevolence, the Author will think herself amply recompensed for the time she has employed in versifying this piteous, and, it is to be hoped, singular Story.

THE
POOR SOLDIER:

AN
AMERICAN TALE.

IN that bright Season when Sol's fervid ray
From Cancer's feverish Sign dispenses day,
The fair FELICIA leaves her rural Bowers,
And rapid drives towards London's stately towers:
Her pamper'd courfers, of their burden proud,
Whirl her light chariot, thro' a dusty cloud,
To that vast Arch which decks great Pembroke's name
With deathless wreaths of architectiv fame;
That Arch nigh which the hallow'd Abbey rears
Those hoary spires that brave the wreck of years,
While Thames, rich-laden with all Nature's stores,
Thro' the wide concave his pure waters pours.

B

FELICIA,

FELICIA, on some pleasing theme intent,
 Mounts slowly up the Bridge's throng'd ascent;
 When glancing careless on the motley Crew
 Who swift, with busy faces, pass'd in view,
 She saw, and seeing heav'd a tender sigh,
 While Pity's tear stood trembling in her eye,
 A Form, (recumbent in a dank Recefs)
 Which spoke variety of wretchedness.
 A Soldier's garb the mournful Object wore,
 A wooden-leg, stern Honour's badge, he bore;
 Dire Famine in his hollow cheek was seen,
 But placid Resignation mark'd his mien.
 Near this wan Wretch, in meditating mood,
 Snow'd o'er by years, a reverend Figure stood,
 In humble plain attire, yet still he seem'd
 A Man on whom more prosperous hours had beam'd:
 Writing he was, save when, with pitying ray,
 His eyes were cast where the poor Soldier lay.

FELICIA stop'd—and bade a Menial go
 On the maim'd Wretch some trifle to bestow;

He,

He, quick returning, to the Fair One said :
 “ Yon hoary Man heaps blessings on thy head,
 For having done, howe’er unwittingly,
 A deed replete with brightest charity.”

“ What means the Sage ? (amaz’d FELICIA cries ;)
 Can alms, so scanty, to a virtue rise ? ”
 Thus speaking, from her chariot she descends,
 And to the Sage her rapid footsteps bends :
 He, gazing on her face, where shone combin’d
 A Syren’s beauty with an Angel’s mind,
 Joyous exclaims :—“ Sure Heaven hath sent thee here,
 To wipe from Misery’s eye the gushing tear !
 To snatch from ghastly Famine’s dread controul
 This poor remains of One who bears a soul
 So brave, so virtuous, that immortal Fame
 Might with Britannia’s Heroes rank his name !
 Ungrateful England ! shall the Man whose blood
 Flow’d, at thy bidding, in a copious flood ;
 Who left his happy Cot, his fair domains,
 To war for thee on Carolina’s Plains,

Shall he in vain solicit thy relief,
 And die from meagre want and pining grief?"
 "Forbid it, Heaven! (replies the ardent Fair;)
 No—Chelsea shields the Veteran from despair;
 There Charity a noble alms bestows
 On him whose blood for Britain's honour flows."

"To gain that noble alms, (the Stranger cries;)
 This mangled Veteran left his native skies;
 But soon, alas, he found each effort vain!
 For what can friendless Poverty obtain?
 His General absent far, no succour nigh,
 The famish'd Wretch had lain him down to die;
 When, chancing o'er this Bridge to speed my way,
 I saw him, knew him, and, from day to day,
 Have of my little pittance spared a part
 To snatch from Death's embrace his freezing heart:
 His Countryman am I—th' ensanguin'd earth
 Of lost America to each gave birth;
 And, as thou cam'st, methought I would essay
 His more than common miseries to pourtray

In artless lines; that all who faunter'd by
Might read his wants, nor kindly aid deny."

FELICIA's heart ran o'er:—"Henceforth, (she cried;)
Be the maim'd Veteran from my purse supplied:
Nor is this all—my utmost power I'll strain
To place him straight mid Chelsea's favour'd Train.
But, tell me, who art thou? whose deeds reveal
A mind that glows with Pity's warmest zeal."

"An humble Loyalist, 'unknown to fame,
(The Sage returns;) and HAMILTON * my name.
On the small wreck of a once plenteous store
I live, nor ever wish my little more,
Save when afflicted Virtue I perceive,
And want the means that Virtue to relieve."

The prostrate Veteran, to whose poignant grief
A stupor kind had minister'd relief,

* PAUL HAMILTON, Esquire, who lost a considerable estate, in South Carolina,
by his steady adherence to the British cause.

Now

Now starts—with rapture and amazement fraught—
 FELICIA's words the torpid Wretch had caught:
 Then, sudden, bending towards the Fair, he cries:
 "Art thou some Angel, sent from happier skies,
 In mercy sent, to guide my devious way
 To those bright Realms of everlasting day,
 Where virtuous souls quaff bliss without alloy,
 And Sorrow's tears are turn'd to smiles of joy?"

The passing Crowd, invited by the sound
 Of Rapture's accents, gather fast around
 The modest Fair, who, by their gaze distress'd,
 With hasty speech the Veteran thus address'd:
 "Shew thy Certificate—yet hold—declare,
 Can'st thou entrust it to a Stranger's care?"

Can I?—O Heaven!—Tho' pierc'd with Misery's dart,
 Suspicion ne'er found entrance to my heart.
 Yes, take my all—and may kind Fate bestow
 The best, the choicest blessings here below——"
 He cou'd no more.—FELICIA grasps the Scroll—
 A thousand soft emotions melt her soul,

As,

As, sudden, to her chariot she retreats,
 And joins the throng in London's noisy streets.
 Thoughtful she goes, revolving many a plan
 To place mid Chelsea's Pensioners the Man
 Whose gallant service, and whose wretched state,
 Call loud for succour from the Rich and Great.
 Thus busied, to that Pile FELICIA came
 Which from barbaric War derives it's name:
 She stops—and to the martial Office goes,
 Where, with kind zeal, she pleads her Veteran's woes,
 To One whose open brow proclaims a soul
 Pliant to gentle Pity's soft controul:
 This Youth—but wherefore, Muse, neglect to breathe
 A name that merits Honour's brightest wreath?
 (If active warm Benevolence may plead
 A sacred title to that envied meed;)
 RANDOLE * thus answers straight the anxious Fair;
 “ To gallant HOWARD †, Chelsea's Chief, repair,
 Since he, and he alone, can grant thy pray'r.”

* This Gentleman is a principal Clerk in the Invalid-Office.

† General SIR GEORGE HOWARD, K. B. Governor of Chelsea Hospital.

“ Alas,

“ Alas, I know him not ! ” (FELICIA sighs ;)

“ Yet seek him, Lady, (ardent RANDOLL cries :) ”

He joys the friendless Soldier to relieve ;

He bids the Child of Sorrow cease to grieve ;

For sweet Philanthropy, angelic Guest !

Hath fix'd her empire in his noble breast.”

Thus urg'd, FELICIA hesitates no more ;

But instant bends her course to HOWARD'S door :

Yet vain her speed—the Chief is far away—

But learning, that the next revolving day

Chelsea's brave Rulers will in council meet,

The Fair, with warmest charity replete,

Resolves those bashful feelings to controul,

Which oft o'erwhelm with dread the female soul,

And, in the virtue of her motive bold,

Before the Chiefs her Story to unfold.

Next morn, to tend the martial Board repair

The summon'd Veteran with his guardian Fair ;

And,

And, while expectant of the Chiefs they wait,
 FELICIA bids the crippled Wretch relate
 His life's sad Tale—The crippled Wretch obeys;
 And, sighing deep, his sorrows thus displays.

Ere War's disastrous ensigns were unfurl'd
 To scatter ruin o'er the Western World;
 Ere Britain's Sons, on tyrant power intent,
 To Boston's Shore their hostile Legions sent;
 Peaceful I liv'd, a wealthy Cottage-Swain,
 In Southern Carolina's fair domain.

Each morn when Sol dispers'd the shades of night,
 And, rising, put the modest stars to flight,
 Alert I rose, my fruitful Farm to till,
 Or guard the Tenants of my fields from ill.
 My daily toil secur'd the meed of health;
 My constant industry improv'd my wealth;
 While, of pure Wedlock's hallow'd joys possess'd,
 Nor Grief, nor Care, found entrance to my breast.

No vain ambitious dreams disturb'd my soul,
 Each passion own'd calm Reason's mild controul,
 Nor did one ardent anxious thought obtrude,
 Save that best ardour to be wise and good:
 For Luxury, sweet Virtue's deadliest Foe!
 Gender'd by Hell to scourge this World below,
 Mid barren wilds disdains to fix her throne,
 And to America is yet unknown.

Such was the calm, the pleasing life I led,
 Till ruthless War her deathful banner spread
 O'er our affrighted Plains—O time deplor'd,
 When Britain 'gainst her Offspring drew the Sword!
 And Civil Discord, with remorseless hand,
 In anarchy and carnage whelm'd the Land!
 How many hearts that fatal hour shall mourn
 In present times and ages yet unborn!
 How many Wretches at this day lament
 A Child, a Husband, or a Father, sent
 To that dread Realm, of flitting Ghosts the seat,
 From whence no Traveller can e'er retreat!

†

At

At War's approach, domestic Comfort fled,
 And dark Suspicion came in Concord's stead:
 The Brother now against the Brother rose,
 And dearest Friends were turn'd to deadliest Foes;
 For each espous'd the cause he favour'd most,
 And some the Congress join'd, and some the British Host.
 For me, tho' much my Country's fate I griev'd,
 Tho' much I wish'd her every wrong reliev'd,
 Still, to my Prince and Albion's interest true,
 No foul rebellious thought this bosom knew:
 Not so my Brother—his ambitious soul
 Had long disdain'd the Parent-State's controul;
 And now, by love of sacred Freedom fir'd,
 To burst his Country's bonds the Youth aspir'd:
 Full oft to shake my loyalty he fought;
 Full oft from Congress tempting offers brought
 To bribe my faith away;—but bribes were vain!—
 For wealth, so purchas'd, who wou'd not disdain?
 At length, he threaten'd fierce—my anger rose—
 And, from that hour, we met not, but as Foes.

Meanwhile the faithful Partner of my heart
 Implor'd her Lord to take a neutral part ;
 And, weeping, urg'd our Children's helpless state,
 With all those various horrors that await
 The softer Sex, when Civil Discord reigns,
 And furious War despotic rule maintains :
 But vain her tears—the British tents I fought,
 And fondly hoped——O curst delusive thought !
 That Albion's power wou'd certain shelter yield,
 And my lov'd Cot from every danger shield.
 Hence, tho' the change this anxious bosom mourn'd,
 My harmless sheephook to a spear I turn'd,
 And under CAMPBELL'S * loyal Banner sped
 To join the Legions by CORNWALLIS led.
 Arriv'd—I press to have my Wife secur'd,
 With our sweet Infants, from the Rebel Syword :

* LORD WILLIAM CAMPBELL, Governor of South-Carolina, whose courage prompted him, at the attack of Fort-Sullivan, to fill a station of peculiar danger, by undertaking the command of the lower-deck guns of the BRISTOL, SIR PETER PARKER'S Ship, commanded by the gallant CAPTAIN MORRIS.

See ANDREWS'S Hist. of the late War.

Nor were my prayers by Albion's Chief forgot,
Hessians he sent to guard my helpless Cot.

Meantime brave PARKER's Fleet receives command,
To rescue Charles-Town from Rebellion's hand :
The naval Chiefs their stately ships prepare,
While CAMPBELL pants the bold emprise to share ;
His faithful Bands an equal ardour show,
And, with their Lord, on board the Bristol go.
Ere blushing twilight ushers in the day,
Our sails we set, our ponderous anchors weigh :
But obstacles perverse the ships detain,
Till, towards high-noon, Fort-Sullivan we gain ;
'Gainst whose strong walls our pealing cannon pour,
Of iron shot, a dark and deathful shower ;
While, from the hostile Fort, with lightning's speed,
Vindictive storms of red-hot balls proceed.
Twice did these globes of fire tremendous raise,
Wide o'er the Bristol's deck, a fearful blaze ;
Yet unappal'd the hardy Sailors stood,
And quench'd th' aspiring flames with Britain's choicest
blood :

Their

Their dauntless CAPTAIN, by his Friends upborne,
 One arm lop'd off, his flesh with bullets torn,
 In manly strains each fainting bosom cheers,
 Extols the Seamen, quells the Landmen's fears,
 Till Rebel hands a ball, hot-glowing, sent,
 Which thro' the vitals of the Hero went;
 Swift at the wound his mighty Spirit fled,
 The quivering body join'd our heaps of Dead.
 Exalted MORRIS! may the trump of Fame
 From age to age resound thy peerless name!
 And Britain's Sons, till time shall cease to be,
 In every bold encounter copy thee!
 Nor shou'd brave PARKER's deeds unnotic'd go;
 Furious he pours his thunders on the Foe,
 Till trembling Carolina's furthest bound
 Of bellowing War repeats the dreadful sound:
 But undismay'd each Rebel Soldier stood
 Mid piles of Slain, and purple tides of blood.

At length our guns the adverse Standard bore
 From it's proud station headlong to the shore;

When,

When, instant, down a high embrasure sprung
 A Warrior * who, our heaviest fire among,
 Coolly advanc'd—the prostrate Standard gain'd;
 And, mid a shower of whizzing deaths, attain'd
 His former post—then on a sponge-staff rais'd
 The tatter'd Flag with kindred stripes emblaz'd.

While, from the Bristol's deck, this deed I view'd,
 My eyes—(I blush to own it—) were bedew'd
 With tears of joy—I gloried in the thought
 Of the bold act my Countryman had wrought.

Ten dreadful hours the British Chieftains wage
 Horrific War in all it's deadliest rage;
 Till Nature, weeping for her Children slain,
 Bids Darkness o'er the coast assume her reign,
 And, with night's footy mantle, interpose
 'Twixt Albion and her still unconquer'd Foes.

* The American, who thus distinguished himself, was a Sergeant of the name of JASPER; but, for a full account of this circumstance, see ANDREWS's *Hist. of the late War.*

And

And now, this fierce, tho' fruitless, conflict o'er,
Intrepid PARKER hasten'd to explore
His shatter'd Squadron's loss—severe it prov'd—
The masts were crash'd — the scuppers stream'd with
blood—

And in the Bristol scarce a Man was found,
Save PARKER's self, who had not felt a wound.
Disabled thus, reluctant we retire,
And blast CORNWALLIS' ears with tidings dire.
When on my wounds the Leech's skill had wrought
A partial cure, my darling Cot I fought;
By CAMPBELL's leave permitted to review
My Wife, my Babes, and take a long adieu
Of all I held most dear, ere Britain's Host
Deserted Carolina's marshy coast,
And up the Chesapeak pursued their way
To Staten-Isle, where the grand Army lay.
Joyous I march'd, tho' oft my vigour fail'd,
While nerveless Languor every limb assail'd;
Yet the sweet hope of seeing those I lov'd
To my weak frame a generous cordial prov'd;

And

And mimic Fancy, this fond heart to cheer,
 Oft bade before my ravish'd fight appear
 My lisping Babes, my kind enraptur'd Wife,
 To welcome home, from scenes of savage strife,
 The Man whose loss had fill'd with keenest pain
 Those breasts where joy was ever wont to reign.—
 But O, what words my feelings can display!
 Or half the horrors of the scene pourtray
 Which met these eyes, just as I gain'd the wood
 Beneath whose stately palms my Dwelling stood!—”

The wretched Soldier paus'd—resistless woe
 Awhile forbade his mournful words to flow :
 He sobs—he choaks—long time his accents fail—
 Till, eas'd by tears, he thus pursues his Tale :

“ ’Twas night—but fire the beams of day supplied
 And Heaven's expanse with glowing crimson dyed.
 Thick clouds of smoke adown the Valley came,
 While—mad'ning fight!—a sheet of ruddy flame

D

Thro'

Thro' every window of my Cot aspires,
 And whelms the crackling roof in raging fires.
 Instant, to save my household Train I fly—
 When lo! a band of Hessians draw my eye,
 Quick marching thro' the meads—to these I call,
 And claim their aid to save my little all;
 But the curst Wretches, deaf to loudest woe,
 With steps more rapid 'cross the Valley go.
 And now, to snatch the Partner of my heart
 From threatening death, amid the flames I dart—
 But O, what horrid sounds invade my ear!
 My tender Children's dying shrieks I hear!
 A Father's aid the tortur'd Babes invoke—
 Furious I rush, thro' suffocating smoke,
 Their blazing couch to find—when lo! my Wife,
 Her bosom scorched, and panting sore for life,
 Senseless beside the shrieking Babes I view—
 Her form I grasp—and, mid hot flames, pursue
 My desperate course, till open air I gain,
 And place my precious burden on the plain;
 Then for my Babes I haste, but haste in vain!

}
 The

The roof gives way, and, with a fearful sound,
My smouldring Cot is levell'd to the ground.

Unman'd, distracted, void of all relief,
Silent I stood, a monument of grief!
Then o'er my writhing Wife in anguish hung—
Frantic she view'd me, and, with faltering tongue,
Exclaim'd: " Ah fly! the Hessian Fiends return!
Again, again, our wretched Cot they burn,
And plunge us deep in flames!—O haste, and send
My bosom's Lord his Offspring to defend!—"

She paus'd—Kind Heaven a moment's sense supplied :—
" And art thou here? (th' enraptur'd Angel cried :)
My Lord, my Love!—and do we meet again?—
Delightful recompence for all my pain!—
Nay, look not thus!—thy earthly sojourn o'er,
Our happy souls shall meet to part no more—
One moment, Heaven!—Alas, it will not be!—
Fain wou'd I live a while to comfort thee—"
Her feeble accents fail—her spirit flies,
On Faith's strong wing, to it's congenial Skies.

For me, kind Nature, with maternal care,
 To chase the thought of ills I could not bear,
 My senses in a deathlike stupor bound;
 Nor did I waken from this sleep profound
 Till faithful Slaves, who long had own'd my sway,
 By chance directed where their Master lay,
 To Britain's tents this torpid form convey'd,
 And call'd back life by medicinal aid.
 Mistaken kindness! happy had I been,
 Thrice happy, if these eyes had never seen
 Earth's dreary prospects more! since Misery's dart
 Had pierc'd, with cureless wounds, this tortur'd heart:
 And sweet Revenge, the Wretch's dread relief!
 I tasted not to mitigate my grief.—

Reproach to discipline!—Eternal shame
 To every Leader of the Hessian name!
 Tho' clear it was that German Fiends, inspir'd
 By Avarice, Imp of Hell! my Dwelling fir'd,
 And pillag'd all my store; tho' every cot,
 By loyal bosoms own'd, partook my lot,

The

The murderous Spoilers unchastis'd remain'd,
And Lords of all the suffering Country reign'd.

Such was the shelter Hessian Guards bestow'd
On those whose blood in Britain's quarrel flow'd!
Unhappy Britain! fure thy Genius fled,
And Wisdom's Spirit, mourning, hung her head,
When needy German Slaves, on plunder bent,
'Gainst thy rebellious Progeny were sent!

Full oft—forgive me, Heaven!—this aching heart,
Inflam'd with wrongs, was ripe to quit the part
Of Albion's King—but Virtue's timely aid
Subdu'd the rash design by passion made:
Yet, stung with all the torments of Despair,
Life seem'd no longer worthy of my care;
And in each field where brave CORNWALLIS fought,
To end my grievous pilgrimage I fought:
But vain the wish a Hero's death to find!
Stern Fate for added woes this breast design'd.

At

At length, a thousand toils and dangers past,
 Relentless Fortune led my steps at last
 To join the Bands who own'd brave SKINNER's* sway,
 And strive to chase Rebellion's Sons away
 From each back Town of Carolina's Plains—
 But vain th' attempt in these unletter'd strains
 To picture horrors Fancy scarce can feign,
 Which, with a heart that bled at every vein,
 I now beheld :—Suffice it then to say,
 That oft our Leader scatter'd wild dismay
 O'er all the Rebel Host—yet still they fought,
 Tho' British gold barbaric Indians brought,
 Arm'd with fell Tomahawks, a murderous Band!
 To scourge with massacre the groaning Land.
 At length, by hopes of sweet Revenge inspir'd,
 By patriot zeal and love of Freedom fir'd,
 The Rebels, strengthen'd with auxilliar force,
 One mighty effort make t' arrest bold SKINNER's course.

* Brigadier-General CORTLAND SKINNER, previous to the late War his Majesty's Attorney-General of the Province of New-Jersey; afterwards Commander of six battalions of Loyalists, in which station he conducted himself with distinguished zeal and bravery.

Now, front to front, our hostile Legions stand,
 And anxious wait the signal of command.
 Barbaric war-whoops pierce the echoing sky,
 Provincial trumpets louder still reply;
 While, by the deep-mouth'd cannon's thundering sound,
 Ear-thrilling yells and martial blasts are drown'd:
 A bloody strife ensues—Death's iron car
 Triumphant ranges o'er the field of war.
 Long time doth Fortune equal hold the scale,
 But England's mighty arms at last prevail:
 Rebellion's Sons in broken ranks retire,
 Save on one spot, where, with heroic fire,
 A brave Provincial wakes the slumbering zeal
 Of every Private for the public weal.

“Yield not, my Friends! (the *Rebel-Patriot* cries;)
 Your bleeding Country on your aid relies!
 O save her liberty, preserve her laws,
 Or greatly fall in Freedom's glorious cause!”

He

He ceas'd—the Rebel Train his words obey,
 And boldly follow where he leads the way.
 'Twas mine to stop th' intrepid Warrior's course;
 But vain my efforts, vain my utmost force!
 Till, hurl'd from Indian hands, a whirring dart
 Refistlefs came, and pierc'd his manly heart—
 He reel'd—he fell—and, gasping fore for breath,
 Faintly exclaim'd: “ I die a glorious death!
 Yield not, my Countrymen!—our Foes retire—
 Nor, with your Chief, let Freedom's cause expire!”

His speech I heard—his dying voice I knew—
 And to a Brother's succour instant flew;
 That hapless Brother's, who full oft had tried
 To draw this loyal heart from Britain's side!
 But O, too late I came!—supine he lay,
 A bleeding ghastly clod of breathless clay!
 Distracted—wild—mid Rebel swords I fly,
 Abhorring life, and resolute to die:
 But, panic-struck, the dastard Foes retreat,
 Nor dare the fury of my arm to meet:

Till,

Till, shelter'd by thick woods, they fiercely pour
 On Britain's conquering Host a leaden shower
 Of whizzing deaths—My better leg is borne
 Far from my side—my wretched bosom torn—
 Deep shades involv'd my eyes—to earth I fell,
 And bade, a while, the noisome World farewell.
 Yet soon, too soon, did medicinal art
 Once more awake to life this woe-worn heart:
 But medicinal art no cure cou'd find
 For the sharp tortures of a wounded mind.
 A mangled Cripple, friendless and forlorn,
 No tender Relative my fate to mourn,
 And, with Affection's healing hand, to shed
 Balfamic roses o'er Pain's restless bed!
 Sullen I lay, the Victim of Despair,
 Too wretched e'en to seek relief from pray'r!
 But that blest Power, who seldom gives a pain
 Beyond what mortal weakness can sustain,
 A holy Pastor sent to sooth my woes,
 And teach me Sorrow's dictates to oppose.

E

O still,

O still, methinks, I view the reverend Sire,
 His pitying eyes illum'd with Heavenly fire;
 As kindly o'er my sleepless couch he hung,
 While oft these accents issued from his tongue.

“ Short is the space ere life's poor dream is o'er,
 And Sorrow's piercing cries are heard no more;
 When the proud Monarch, and the groveling Slave,
 Alike shall moulder in the lonesome grave,
 While their freed souls, without distinction, mount
 To give, in Realms Above, their great account:
 Then all our keenest sufferings will appear
 Beneath the transient anguish of a tear;
 Then shall we know, that every stroke of Fate
 Was sent to fit us for a better state,
 Purge from our grosser part each base alloy,
 And frame the towering soul for endless joy.
 Let Christians, then, while yet on Earth they rove,
 By pure Religion, and by deeds of love,
 Ensure their bright inheritance Above.

Learn.

Learn all the various ills of life to bear;
 With meek-ey'd Hope repel the Fiend, Despair;
 And tho' by adverse Fortune fore oppress,
 With pious Resignation arm the breast."

By words like these, he sweeten'd Sorrow's leaven;
 By words like these, he rais'd my thoughts to Heaven;
 Religion o'er my soul assum'd her reign,
 And Peace and Health came smiling in her Train.
 Such were the gifts this holy Man bestow'd;
 While to his persevering zeal I ow'd
 The kind Certificate which SKINNER gave,
 This mangled frame from pining Want to save.

"Haste, Soldier, haste, (my reverend Pastor cries;)
 To Albion haste!—her charity supplies
 For each maim'd Veteran a calm Retreat,
 With more than life's necessities replete.
 England's last CHARLES, tho' little prone to shed
 Comfort's sweet balm o'er thriftless Virtue's head,

A stately Mansion rais'd on Chelsea's strand,
For houseless helpless Soldiers of the Land."

With grateful heart, these dictates I obey,
And o'er the vast Atlantic wend my way
To Parent Albion's sea-encircl'd shore,
Whither my Chief had bent his course before.
Fan'd by propitious gales, we lightly sweep
The level bosom of the buoyant Deep;
While spirit-kindling Hope, a Stranger-Guest!
Once more dilates with joy this haras'd breast;
Till oft I ween, my every care will cease,
And life's declining sun go down in peace.
While in these thoughts my former ills are lost,
With pealing shouts we hail Britannia's coast:
Arriv'd—I seek kind SKINNER's helping hand
To place his Soldier safe mid Chelsea's Band;
But adverse Fate now hastens to destroy
My short-liv'd dreams of sublunary joy.
London's proud towers, with many a toil, I gain,
And search the Warrior there, but search in vain!

At length, by Rumour led, his steps I trace
 Far towards the North, where Mersey's waves embrace
 Wide-stretching Liverpool, whose walls infold
 Far-beaming Commerce, on her throne of gold.
 But here I quaff the bitter cup of grief;
 Fair Liverpool no longer boasts the Chief;
 To Caledonian Hills he speeds his way—
 Disastrous fortune!—on the self-same day
 When, penniless, exhausted and forlorn,
 With painful steps I reach the City's bourn.
 My courage sinks—yet still resolv'd to bear
 Life's cruel storms, and chase the Fiend, Despair;
 To seek my Chief mid Scottish Hills I stray,
 And beg, from door to door, my weary way:
 But disappointment still my path attends—
 No Chief, alas, I find—no pitying Friends!
 Despis'd, abus'd, from Scottish Hills I flee,
 And, aided by the Seraph, Charity,
 Imperial London once again I view—
 Shame ties my tongue—O how shall I pursue

My

My doleful Story here!—That savage Race,
 Beadles yclep'd—of Justice the disgrace!
 Yet, by their Office, bound to guard her cause,
 And thro' each district execute her laws,
 That flinty Tribe, tho' oft I loudly urge
 My clear Certificate, these shoulders scourge
 With biting thongs—my honest scars I show—
 But still they aim the vile degrading blow;
 And, as a Vagrant, spurn the Man, whose all
 Was freely lavish'd at Britannia's call:
 Till bleeding at the Ruffians' feet I lie,
 And ask of Heaven that wretched boon, to die!
 Nor long had Nature been condemn'd to bear
 The double smart of Shame and fierce Despair,
 With those keen tortures starving Wretches feel,
 Had not kind HAMILTON, (with Pity's zeal,)
 By cordial draughts the springs of life renew'd,
 And fed these clammy lips with needful food."

THUS far the Soldier—While FELICIA's eyes
 With indignation flash'd—"O shame! (she cries;)

Are

Are blows the guerdon Britain's Sons dispense
 On Men whose all is lost in her defence?
 Are blows the guerdon Justice should decree
 To Men who starve thro' virtuous loyalty?
 Curs'd be those Fiends who, under Justice' name,
 Too oft have stung the noble breast with shame!
 Adding to pale Disease and Famine's gripe,
 Revilings harsh, with many a barbarous stripe!—
 But wherefore thus, the fleeting moments waste?
 To Chelsea's Rulers instant let me haste—
 And O, if human frailty may aspire
 To gain of righteous Heaven one fond desire,
 Grant me, ye Powers, to heal this Veteran's woes,
 And gild his latter days with soft repose!"

She spoke—when RANDOLL, whose benignant heart
 With kindest warmth espous'd the Soldier's part,
 In pensive mood advanc'd:—"Fair Dame, (he cries;)
 Malicious Fate our ardent wish denies,
 For HOWARD—Friend of Worth!—blest Chelsea's Lord,
 This day presides not at the Council-board!"

He

He ceas'd.—A thousand fears perplex the Dame;
 When, sent by favouring Fortune, HORNECK* came,
 With BUNBURY, of Britain's Nymphs the pride!
 In happy hour FELICIA's steps to guide.
 To these she tells her Veteran's tragic Tale:
 His hapless lot the feeling Pair bewail.
 BUNBURY's bright eyes soft Pity's dew-drops grace,
 And add fresh sweetness to her Angel-face;
 While HORNECK e'en FELICIA's ardour shares,
 And, instant, to the Council-board repairs:
 The Soldier's cause in manly strains he pleads;
 And fair FELICIA to the presence leads
 Of courteous HALE†, who second holds command
 O'er sheltering Chelsea's war-difabled Band;
 To him the Fair proclaims her Veteran's woes,
 To him the pallid mangled Wretch she shows;
 Nor shows in vain — The Soldier's ghastly look,
 Where Famine languish'd, more persuasive spoke

* Lieutenant-Colonel HORNECK, of the Guards.

† Lieutenant-General B. HALE, Lieutenant-Governor of Chelsea Hospital.

Than

Than all the melting eloquence that hung
 On sweet FELICIA's fascinating tongue.
 But courteous HALE laments with heart-felt grief
 The want of power to minister relief,
 Till, from his Corps, the Veteran hath obtain'd
 (What his hard service should, ere then, have gain'd)
 A full Discharge.—“Alas, (FELICIA cries)
 While tears of anguish glisten in her eyes,
 If for such forms the suffering Wretch must wait,
 Thy charity, perhaps, may come too late!
 But, if compassion's glow thy bosom warms,
 For once dispense with unimportant forms!
 Necessity o'er Custom should prevail.”
 Her words sink deep upon the breast of HALE:
 To candid YONGE*, who long, with equal hand,
 O'er War's dread Sons hath borne supreme command,
 He goes, and earnest pleads the Veteran's cause:
 Kind YONGE dispenses with retarding laws;

* The right honourable SIR GEORGE YONGE, Bart. K. B. Secretary at War.

And promifes—while Heaven approving fmiles—
 To recompense the humble Soldier's toils
 By an out-penfion from that bounteous Board
 O'er which brave HOWARD reigns prefiding Lord.
 Impatient HORNECK to FELICIA brings
 (While Pleafure to his bounding feet gives wings)
 This welcome news—FELICIA treads on air—
 “ High Heaven (fhe cries) hath liften'd to my pray'r !
 For once I tafte that pureft earthly joy,
 That only blifs undafh'd with bafe alloy,
 The luxury of turning deepeft Woe
 To fweet Content, to Rapture's brighteft glow ! ”
 Thus fpeaking, to the Veteran fhe repairs ;
 Her joyous brow the happy news declares —
 But words are vain thofe feelings to impart
 Which rife fpontaneous in a grateful heart !
 As well might dim-ey'd Man attempt to trace
 Th' impenetrable depths of Heavenly grace !
 Shall then a Mufe who vent'rous ftrikes the Lyre,
 By Nature taught—fhall fuch a Mufe afpire

The

The Veteran's strong emotions to rehearse
 In the bold thunders of heroic verse?—
 Far be 't from her such daring chords to try!
 Let Fancy, here, Description's place supply.

FELICIA now, in accents that impart
 New rapture to her thankful Soldier's heart,
 With gracious smile takes leave; but first the Fair
 Commends her favour'd Veteran to the care
 Of time-bleach'd HAMILTON, who kindly came
 To aid, in Virtue's cause, the zealous Dame.
 With wonder fill'd, the happy Soldier rears
 His feeble hands, his eyes, suffus'd with tears,
 To Heaven's high Throne; and, on FELICIA's head,
 Implores the bounteous SOURCE OF JOY to shed
 His brightest beams.—“ Ah why, (FELICIA cries;)
 Ah why, for me, invoke yon azure skies?
 What I have done, at melting Pity's call,
 Afflicted Virtue may demand from all:
 Yet long it was—O shame to Human kind!
 Ere thou, ill-fated Man! one Friend could'st find

Thy houseless head from pelting storms to guard,
 Or claim, at Britain's hand, thy due reward.
 But think not, here, my charity shall pause—
 To HOWARD's self I'll boldly plead thy cause,
 Till public kindness shall thy age maintain,
 Till safe thou dwell'st mid Chelsea's peaceful Train."

She spoke—and once more left Augusta's towers
 To taste the fragrance of her rural Bowers ;
 While self-approving Conscience, Heavenly Sprite !
 Inspir'd each swift-wing'd moment with delight.
 And now the Dame her Soldier's Tale pourtrays,
 And straight to HOWARD's pitying eye conveys :
 While he, who never turn'd from Misery's pray'r,
 A day appoints to meet the anxious Fair :
 But, ere that day, the kind FELICIA hies
 Again to bless her grateful Soldier's eyes :
 No longer on the Bridge his form she views,
 But, taught by HAMILTON, her course pursues
 Thro' rugged streets, by many a crazy wall,
 And time-shook mansion, nodding to it's fall ;

Till

Till near a drain, where filthy offals flow'd,
 FELICIA found her Veteran's drear abode;
 Whose bulging sides the roof could ill sustain,
 Whose dirt-grim'd windows scarce could boast a pane:
 Unbroke—while fetid noxious smells prevail
 Thro' the dull street, and taint each passing gale.
 FELICIA's chariot now, with wondering eye,
 The Tenants of this shatter'd hut descry;
 And much they marvel what the courtly Fair
 Can want with Wretches who inhabit there:
 Nor could they credit, that so great a Dame
 To seek a poor decrepit Soldier came:
 But she, to view her crippled Charge demands;
 The Wretches stare—and, with uplifted hands,
 Affirm, that three revolving days are spent
 Since, thriftless, from their hut the Soldier went,
 To Chelsea bound.—FELICIA's cheek grows pale—
 While chilling fears her gentle breast assail,
 Lest they, in whose lean looks and tatter'd gear
 Strong marks of bitterest penury appear,

Lur'd

Lur'd by that Pension which, the Dame believ'd,
 Her feeble Veteran had, ere then, receiv'd,
 Shou'd, e'en to Hell, curst Lucre have purfu'd,
 And in his blood their murderous hands imbru'd.
 Struck by this thought—to Chelsea's domes she flies,
 And every means to find the Veteran tries;
 When aged Pensioners, who erst had seen
 Their Brother of the War, and mark'd his mien,
 Essay to search him out; their toils succeed;
 And, to his guardian Fair, the Man of woe they lead.

FELICIA joys to find her terrors vain;
 But soon, alas, that joy is turn'd to pain!
 With infant weakness, and with snail-like pace,
 While Death glares horrid in his eager face,
 The tottering Soldier comes—so shrunk, so wan,
 He seems the walking shadow of a Man!
 Yet renovating joy his strength renews
 When sweet FELICIA's welcome form he views.
 "O Heaven! (exclaims the Fair,) what turn of Fate
 Hath sunk thee, Soldier, to this piteous state?"

The

The mournful cause reveal."—To speak, he tries;
 But on his lips each half-form'd sentence dies;
 Till, after many a feeble vain essay,
 He falters out: "As, on the destin'd day,
 To yon proud Hospital I bent my way
 The promis'd Boon to claim; a languor dread
 Thro' all my nerveless members sudden spread;
 And oft I fear'd this pulse would cease to beat,
 Ere Chelsea's Walls my longing eyes should greet:
 But vain that fear—the Hospital I gain'd,
 And there, from Charity's warm hand, obtain'd
 A Scroll whose power this tottering Fabric plac'd
 In yon Abode, with lovely neatness grac'd;
 Where soft Humanity's all-potent art
 Of Pain's sharp tortures numbs the raging smart.
 To thee, kind Angel! this Retreat I owe—
 How different from my late Abode of woe!
 Where noxious filth the crazy hut defil'd,
 Where Famine dwelt, and Comfort never smil'd!—
 Fain would I live—on thy lov'd form to gaze—
 Fain would I live—to blazon wide thy praise—

Ah no!—it will not be!—This heart was broke
By the fell Beadle's ignominious stroke;
Nor can thy hand, so nobly prone to save!
Long keep thy grateful Soldier from the grave."

FELICIA wept.—"O waste not (cries the Fair,) Thy ebbing strength, nor yield thee to Despair!
My ready purse some chosen Leech shall bring,
With goblets sparkling from Hygeia's spring,
'Gainst all thy ailments potent war to wage,
And check the scorching fever's desperate rage."

She spoke—and to his new-found Mansion bears
Her gasping Charge; nor pains, nor gold she spares,
By med'cine's aid, to stay his fleeting breath,
And blunt the arrows of all-conquering Death.
But tho' each tender inclination led
The anxious Dame to watch her Soldier's bed,
Yet strong Necessity, whose tyrant sway,
E'en Kings themselves acknowledge and obey,

Compels

Compels her from his couch her course to bend
 Impatient HOWARD's summons to attend:
 Hence, to a trusty Menial she consigns
 Her thankful Charge, whose brow with pleasure shines
 As, in soft strains, the condescending Fair
 Bids him rely on her unwearied care.

“ And must thou hence? (with trembling voice he
 cries;)

And must thou hence? blest Favourite of the Skies!
 Ah then no more thy Soldier shall review
 That honour'd form—thou best of Friends, adieu!
 Long may'st thou live, meek Virtue's Sons to bless,
 And dry the bitter tear of deep Distress!
 Long may'st thou live—and may the Powers divine
 Add to thy ~~days~~ whate'er they take from mine!
 For soon this World will vanish from my sight,
 Like some delusive phantom of the night;
 But if to Spirits, after death, be given
 Th' ecstatic bliss of chasing Sorrow's leaven

G

From

From those they reverenc'd here, my care shall be
 To spread, sweet task ! a guardian shield o'er thee ;
 And deck thy earthly paths with choicest flowers,
 Till safe I guide thee to Celestial Bowers ;
 Where only thou a due reward can'st find
 For all the graces that adorn thy mind !”

He ceas'd—FELICIA, silent, press'd his hand,
 And fled a scene which Nature cou'd not stand :
 Meanwhile fam'd Leeches try their utmost art
 To renovate the drooping Soldier's heart ;
 But mortal pangs the feat of life assail,
 Nor deepest skill, nor precious drugs prevail !
 For ailments, gender'd by corrosive Woe,
 Full oft have given to life as dire a blow
 As Java's fatal Tree, whose wondrous breath
 Empoisons every gale with instantaneous death !
 And ere the kind FELICIA cou'd regain
 Her Veteran's couch, stern Fate had burst in twain
 His mortal bonds.—Mourn, Sons of Britain, mourn,
 For him, who to the silent grave is borne

On that auspicious hour when Chelsea's Lord
Benignly pants his sufferings to reward,
And smooth the pillow of Disease and Pain
With every comfort Chelsea's Walls contain* !
But fruitless is each effort to impart
The chilling damp that struck FELICIA's heart
When, borne on Pleasure's gale, she came to bless
Her Veteran with glad tidings of success,
The Mourner heard, his towering soul was flown
To the dread precincts of a World unknown.
Nor less doth HOWARD's feeling heart lament
That fatal shaft, by power resistless sent,
Which robs him of a joy beyond compare,
The joy of making injur'd Worth his care.

* SIR GEORGE HOWARD, when FELICIA waited upon him, assured her, that CHARLES SHORT should, on the first vacancy, be admitted as an In-Pensioner of Chelsea Hospital ; although there were, at the time of her application, above nine hundred Persons soliciting the same favour :—he declared, that he never suffered himself to be governed by the intercessions of the Powerful, but always relieved, in the first instance, those who appeared to him the greatest objects of charity ; therefore, in compliance with this rule, he would give every possible relief to SHORT, whose case he deemed peculiarly unfortunate.

T H E E N D.

On that auspicious hour when Chellie's Lord
 Benignly parts his suffering to reward
 And smoothes the pillow of Disease and Pain
 With every comfort Chellie's Walls contain
 But fruitless is each effort to impart
 The chilling damp that struck Chellie's heart
 When borne on Heaven's gale, she came to this
 Her Veteran with glad anticipations
 The Mother heard his tenderest love
 To the dread possibility of a World unknown
 Not less dear Howard's smiling heart
 That fatal hour, by power withheld
 Which robs him of a joy beyond compare
 The joy of making known to earth his part

* Sir Charles Howard was a Frenchman, who was
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